Claims

1. A conference management system (201) in a first telecommunications network (101) comprising:

a receiver that is configured to receive a second message (413) from a second data-processing system (203) specifying that a first conference is starting, wherein the first conference is identified by a first conference ID in the second message (413), wherein the first conference involves a predetermined set of entities identified in a first message (403, 407) transmitted to the second data-processing system;

a transmitter that is configured to transmit:

(i) the first message to the second data-processing system (203), wherein the first message specifies a subscription to events that involve the predetermined set of entities, wherein the subscription causes the second data processing system (203) to monitor for all events occurring for the first conference ID, and to transmit notifications to the conference management system (201) when the events occur,

(ii) upon receiving the second message (413), a third message (419) to a third data-processing system (211) in a second telecommunications network (102-1), wherein the third message specifies to the third data-processing system (211) to monitor for activities related to the first conference and to notify the conference management system (201) of the activities, and wherein the first and second telecommunications networks are managed by different service providers; and

a processor that is configured to coordinate, based on a fourth message (425) being received from the third data-processing system subsequent to the transmitting of the third message and that specifies the first conference, the establishing of a communications link (655) between a first bridging device (204) in the first telecommunications network and a second bridging device (212) in the second telecommunications network, wherein the first and second bridging devices are being used by the first conference.

2. The conference management system of claim 1, wherein the processor is further configured to determine a second conference identification (ID) in response to the receiving of the second message, and wherein the second conference ID serves to identify the first conference to the third data-processing system; and/or

wherein the transmitter is further configured to transmit a fifth message (599) to a session manager (202), wherein the fifth message specifies that the communications link is to be established for the first conference.

3. The conference management system of claim 1 or claim 2, wherein the receiver is further configured to receive a fifth message (443) from the second data-processing system (203), wherein the fifth message specifies that the first conference is ending;

wherein the processor is further configured to coordinate the dropping of the communications link (655) between the first bridging device and the second bridging device, in response to the receiving of the fifth message; and

wherein the transmitter is further configured to transmit:

(i) a sixth message (447) to a session manager (202), wherein the sixth message specifies that the communications link is to be dropped for the first conference, and

(ii) a seventh message (449) to the third data-processing system (211), wherein the seventh message specifies to stop monitoring for activities related to the first conference.

4. The conference management system of claims 1 or 2, wherein the receiver is further configured to receive a fifth message (463) from the third data-processing system (211), wherein the fifth message specifies that a participant endpoint (104-1) has dropped from the first conference;

wherein the processor is further configured to coordinate the dropping of the communications link (655) between the first bridging device and the second bridging device, in response to the participant endpoint being the last endpoint to have been using the second bridging device for the first conference; and

wherein the transmitter is further configured to transmit a sixth message (467) to a session manager (202), specifying the first conference.

5. A first telecommunications network (101) comprising:

a conference management system (201) that is configured to:

(i) transmit, to a second data-processing system (203), a first message (403, 407) that specifies a subscription to events that involve a predetermined set of entities, wherein the subscription causes the second data processing system (203) to monitor for all events occurring for the a conference ID, and to transmit notifications to the conference management system (201) when the events occur,

(ii) receive a second message (413) from the second data-processing system specifying that a first conference is starting, wherein the first conference involves the set of entities identified in the first message (407, 403), wherein the first conference is identified by the first conference ID in the second message (413),

(iii) transmit, upon receiving the second message (413), a third message (419) to a third data-processing system (211) in a second telecommunications network (102-1), wherein the third message specifies to the third data-processing system (211) to monitor for activities related to the first conference, and to notify the conference management system (201) of the activities, and wherein the first and second telecommunications networks are managed by different service providers, and

(iv) establish, upon receiving a fourth message (425) from the third data-processing system wherein the fourth message specifies the first conference, a communications link (655) between a first bridging device (204) in the first telecommunications network and a second bridging device (212) in the second telecommunications network, wherein the first and second bridging devices are being used by the first conference, and wherein the receiving of the fourth message is subsequent to the transmitting of the third message; and

a network management platform that is configured to:

(i) receive the first message from the conference management system (201),

(ii) receive, from the first bridging device (204), an indication that a communication session (519) with a first endpoint (104-2) has started, and

(iii) transmit the second message to the conference management system, in response to the receiving of (a) the first message and (b) the indication that the communication session has started.

6. The first telecommunications network (101) of claim 5, further comprising a multipoint control unit (204), wherein the multipoint control unit is configured to provide the functionality of the first bridging device; and/or

wherein the first telecommunications network (101) further comprises a session manager (202) that is configured to add the communications link in response to receiving, from the conference management system, a message (599) that specifies the first conference.

7. A method comprising:

transmitting, by a conference management system (201) in a first telecommunications network (101) to a second data-processing system (203), a first message (403, 407) that specifies a subscription to events that involve a predetermined set of entities, wherein the subscription causes the second data processing system (203) to monitor for all events occurring for a first conference ID, and to transmit notifications to the conference management system (201) when the events occur;

receiving, by the conference management system (201), a second message (413)

from the second data-processing system specifying that a first conference is starting, wherein the first conference involves the set of entities identified in the first message, wherein the first conference is identified by the first conference ID in the second message (413);

upon receiving the second message (413), transmitting by the conference management system a third message (419) to a third data-processing system (211) in a second telecommunications network (102-1), wherein the third message specifies to the third data-processing system to monitor for activities related to the first conference and to notify the conference management system (201) of the activities, and wherein the first and second telecommunications networks are managed by different service providers; and

upon receiving a fourth message (425) from the third data-processing system wherein the fourth message specifies the first conference, establishing by the conference management system a communications link (655) between a first bridging device (204) in the first telecommunications network and a second bridging device (212) in the second telecommunications network, wherein the first and second bridging devices are being used by the first conference, and wherein the receiving of the fourth message is subsequent to the transmitting of the third message.

8. The method of claim 7, wherein the set of entities comprises an enterprise and a communications service provider, wherein the communications service provider manages the second telecommunications network (102-1).

9. The method of claim 7 or claim 8, further comprising determining a second conference identification (ID) in response to the receiving of the second message, and wherein the second conference ID serves to identify the first conference to the third data-processing system; and/or

further comprising:

receiving, by the second data-processing system (203), the first message from the conference management system (201);

receiving, by the second data-processing system from the first bridging device (204), an indication that a communication session (519) with a first endpoint (104-2) has started; and

transmitting, by the second data-processing system, the second message to the conference management system, in response to the receiving of (i) the first message and (ii) the indication that the communication session has started.

10. The method of any of claims 7 to 9 wherein the establishing of the communications link comprises transmitting, by the conference management system (201), a fifth message (599) to a session manager (202), wherein the fifth message specifies the

first conference.

11. The method of any of claims 7 to 9 further comprising:

upon receiving the second message (413), transmitting by the conference management system a fifth message (419) to a fourth data-processing system (211) in a third telecommunications network (102-2), wherein the fifth message specifies to the fourth data-processing system to monitor for activities related to the first conference, and wherein the first and third telecommunications networks are managed by different service providers; and

upon receiving a sixth message (425) from the fourth data-processing system wherein the sixth message specifies the first conference, establishing by the conference management system a communications link (655) between the first bridging device (204) and a third bridging device (212) in the third telecommunications network, wherein the third bridging device is also being used by the first conference, and wherein the receiving of the sixth message is subsequent to the transmitting of the fifth message;

wherein the first, second, and third telecommunications networks may be managed by different service providers.

12. The method of any of claims 7 to 9 further comprising:

receiving, by the conference management system (201), a fifth message (443) from the second data-processing system (203), wherein the fifth message specifies that the first conference is ending; and

dropping by the conference management system, the communications link (655) between the first bridging device and the second bridging device, in response to the receiving of the fifth message;

wherein the dropping of the communications link may comprise:

transmitting, by the conference management system (201), a sixth message (447) to a session manager (202), specifying the first conference; and

transmitting, by the conference management system, a seventh message (449) to the third data-processing system (211), specifying to stop monitoring for activities related to the first conference.

13. The method of any of claims 7 to 9 further comprising:

receiving, by the conference management system (201), a fifth message (463) from the third data-processing system (211), wherein the fifth message specifies that a participant endpoint (104-1) has dropped from the first conference; and

dropping, by the conference management system, the communications link (655) between the first bridging device and the second bridging device, in response to the participant endpoint being the last endpoint to have been using the second bridging device for the first conference.

14. The method of claim 13 wherein the dropping of the communications link comprises transmitting, by the conference management system (201), a sixth message (467) to a session manager (202), specifying the first conference.

15. The method of any claims 12 through 14 further comprising waiting for a predetermined time interval before the dropping of the communications link.